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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide practical information to assist state and local aging agencies in developing strategic relationships with businesses in their communities. The goals of the guidebook are: to spark the aging network's interest in developing and expanding public/private partnerships in the area of older worker employment; to provide guidance on how to create such partnerships; and to share examples of partnerships that other aging network organizations have tried. The chapters include: (1) "Older Worker Employment Partnerships: Exciting Propositions," an introduction to the world of older worker employment partnerships, detailing why the aging network and business should be and are interested in these types of projects; (2) "The Range of Partnership Possibilities," where the range of partnership formats are discussed; (3) "Steps in Creating an Older Worker Partnership Strategy," the "how-to" section; and (4) "Partnerships in Action: Case Studies," which details case studies of older worker partnerships from around the United States. (BF)

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PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN OLDER WORKER EMPLOYMENT

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A GUIDE FOR THE AGING NETWORK

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PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN OLDER WORKER EMPLOYMENT

A GUIDE FOR THE AGING NETWORK

By Denise D. Jessup

July, 1992

Washington Business Group on Health
National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging
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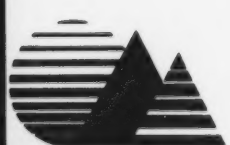

Older Americans Act
NATIONAL ELDERCARE CAMPAIGN

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Acknowledgements

Welcome to *Public/Private Partnerships in Older Worker Employment*, one in a series of five guidebooks on partnerships between aging agencies and business. This guidebook was produced under the auspices of the National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging, a cooperative initiative of the U.S. Administration on Aging and the Washington Business Group on Health.

The purpose of the guidebook series is to provide practical information to assist state and local aging agencies in developing strategic relationships with businesses in their communities. In addition to this guidebook on older worker employment, other topics covered in this series include health promotion, volunteerism, and eldercare, as well as overall partnership strategies.

The author of this guidebook, Denise Jessup, is a consultant to the Washington Business Group on Health, and former associate director of Career Encores, a Los Angeles-based older worker consultation and placement agency.

The Washington Business Group on Health would like to extend its appreciation to the many individuals and agencies whose generous contributions brought this project to fruition: The Seattle-King County Division on Aging served as the host agency for the development of a Task Force of Seattle-based employers and social service agencies that helped to shape and review the guidebook. (The Appendix contains a list of Task Force members.) Additional oversight and review was provided by Sally Coberly, Ph.D., associate director of WBGH's Institute on Aging, Work and Health. Puget Sound Power & Light undertook the printing of the guidebook. Ultimately, we are indebted to all of the "partners in action"—those in the aging network and private industry who were willing to share their time and tell us about their experiences with older worker partnerships.

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Robert C. Levin
Director
National Eldercare Institute on
Business and Aging
Washington Business Group on Health

Preface

This guidebook is one in a series of publications on public/private partnerships and was prepared in conjunction with the Washington Business Group on Health in its role as a participant in the U.S. Administration on Aging's National Eldercare Campaign. The series also includes publications on partnerships in corporate eldercare, health promotion, and volunteerism, as well as an overview publication on making the business connection.

The goals of this guidebook are:

1. to spark the aging network's interest in developing and expanding public/private partnerships in the area of older worker employment,
2. to provide guidance on how to create such partnerships, and
3. to share examples of partnerships that other aging network organizations have tried.

In keeping with these goals, the guidebook is organized in four chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the world of older worker employment partnerships, detailing why the aging network and business should be and are interested in these types of projects.

Chapter 2 discusses the range of partnership formats. Chapter 3 is the "how-to" section, describing the steps involved in designing a partnership strategy. Chapter 4 provides detailed case studies of older worker partnerships from around the U.S.

The examples may not match the specific needs of your organization and your local or regional businesses. Rather than provide examples to be replicated exactly, our hope is that the guidebook will assist you in developing your own creative public/private partnerships.

Chapter 1

Older Worker Employment Partnerships: Exciting Propositions

At the New York City Department for the Aging, an older job-seeker receives free computer training, thanks to the AGEWORKS Training Center, a partnership between the Department, IBM, and other businesses and foundations.

In Western Michigan, employers such as D & W Food Centers, Inc. and Home Health Services are making speeches to business groups and encouraging their colleagues to hire older workers through the Area Agency on Aging's employment program.

In Atlanta, older workers nominated by their employers were honored at a luncheon coordinated by the Atlanta Regional Commission and sponsored by the Sears-Roebuck Foundation.

WHY were these businesses willing to participate in older worker employment partnerships? The first answer is because they were asked by the aging network. Asking was the first step, but, of course, it was not enough. The second answer is that the partnership options were designed to be attractive to the businesses. The examples above and those described throughout this guidebook prove that business leaders are interested in older workers and in partnerships, especially when given attractive partnership options.

Why Business Is Interested in Older Workers

Organizations employ older workers because doing so often makes good business sense. Some of the reasons business leaders are interested in older workers include:

- Slow growth of the workforce and resulting labor shortages
- Skill shortages and less-than-desirable workforce attitudes in other age segments
- The aging of their own companies' workforces
- Aging customer populations

Each of these reasons is discussed more fully below. You might share some of this information when motivating a business representative to be interested in older workers and when encouraging that representative to participate in your partnership. The four "boxes" in this chapter list questions you might use to prompt employers to think about older workers.

"[These partnership employers] see their labor pool drying up. They get so many applicants who can't even fill out an application. They are forward-thinking employers who see this [partnership] as one way to build a labor pool."

— Robin Schaef
Sonoma County
Area Agency on Aging

Questions

for Employers About Slow Workforce Growth Concerns

- Are you finding it harder to recruit employees?
- Are you concerned about future recruiting?
- How many new employees will you need to hire by the year 2000?

Slow Growth in the Workforce

Employers are becoming concerned about the slow growth of the workforce. Indeed, between now and the year 2030, the labor force is projected to increase at a slower rate than at any time since the Great Depression.[1] Consistent with the declining number of younger people, the number of younger workers between the ages of 16 and 24 will be almost 1 million less in the year 2000 than in 1986.[2] Some areas of the country have already faced severe labor shortages in which all skills have been in demand. In recent years, parts of New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and the Washington, D.C. area have had unemployment rates hovering near 4 percent.[3]

Add to this slow growth concern the estimate that 70 percent of our economic growth from 1979 to 1986 was due to an expanding number of workers rather than productivity gains and the reason why employers are disturbed by current and projected labor force shortages becomes increasingly clear.[4] While the current recession may limit some employers' immediate concerns about labor shortages, others are already looking to older workers as a partial answer to filling the gaps.

Concerns about the Younger Workforce: Skills and Attitudes

In the near future, only 25 percent of new young workers will have the skills to compete for 60 percent of new jobs—jobs that will require strong skills.[5]

Employers report that basic skill shortages are already among us. In a survey by the American Society of Personnel Administration of 707 personnel officials, 49 percent reported that their applicant pools were lacking in writing skills. In addition, 43 percent reported job specific/technical skills problems, and 42 percent reported difficulty in recruiting employees with good verbal communication skills.[6]

Employers contacting Careers Encores, a non-profit older worker employment service in Los Angeles, frequently express that their concern about work attitudes and skills of young workforce entrants is a major reason for recruiting older workers. Work ethic, attendance, and tardiness are their most common worries. These labor force shortages and concerns about attitudes and skills have heightened employers' interest in older workers.

Questions

for Employers About Workforce Attitudes and Skills

- Are you concerned about the quality of your current workforce?
- Does the level of basic skills attained by your workforce meet your company's needs?
- Are you finding it difficult to recruit candidates who can read, write and communicate well?
- Is the attendance, timeliness and work ethic of your workforce a concern to you?
- Is it becoming harder to find employees with the specific skills and training that you need?

A Company's Own Aging Workforce

Nationwide, the number of workers age 55 and over will increase quite slowly through the year 2000.[7] The number of people age 55 and over in the civilian labor force is projected to increase from approximately 15.1 million in 1988 to approximately 17.4 million in 2000. This slow growth plays a relatively small role in the "middle-aging" of the workforce, which is primarily due to the aging of the baby boom generation and to the baby bust of the '60s and '70s.[8]

However, the workforces of some companies are aging more quickly than the workforce at large. The steel, auto, and utility industries, for example, often have high median employee ages.[9] One high technology example is The Aerospace Corporation in El Segundo, California. In 1987, this company already had an average employee age of 47, and it employed more people over age 60 than under age 30. Your discussions with employers about the aging workforce will be most effective if they are company-specific, that is, related to their own companies' populations.

Aging Customer Populations

The U.S. population of people age 55 and over is expected to increase from 51.4 million in 1986 to 59.1 million in the year 2000. In contrast, the number of Americans between the ages of 16 and 34 will decrease, from 77.4 million to 70.3 million.[10] This demographic shift affects both a business's employee population and its consumer population, and may motivate employers to recruit older workers.

Questions

for Employers About the Aging of Their Workforces

- What percentage of your employees are over the age of 50?
- In the near future, will you face a "wave" of retirements?
- Will you lose a significant number of skilled employees who know your company's culture and how to "get things done" in your company?
- Are you concerned about maintaining motivation and rewards for your older workforce?

Questions

for Employers About Aging Customer Populations

- Are your products and services used by the older population?
- Is the older segment of your customer population growing?
- Do your customers prefer being served by people their own age?

"...many older adults actually wait in line to receive assistance from a retiree, especially when it comes to questions about their pensions or IRAs. They seem to trust the judgment of older workers who can share their experiences and empathize with their needs."

— Gail Abel
Wells Fargo Bank[11]

Why Business Is Interested in Older Worker Partnerships or What the Aging Network Has to Offer

Both the aging network and the private sector "win" with partnerships. Through various older worker partnerships, the aging network can offer the private sector the following benefits:

1. Publicity opportunities and methods of communicating business interest in community issues to the public.
2. A tangible way to meet community needs.
3. Credibility through association with a non-profit or government agency with a worthwhile mission.
4. Access to older job-seekers, through the partnership itself, and/or through an ongoing employment assistance program.
5. Opportunities to acknowledge and reward a business's own older employees.
6. Knowledge about demographic trends and recruiting, managing, and training an older workforce.
7. Education about how older workers can benefit one's own company.
8. Links to additional programs and partnerships that will expand hiring sources.
9. Links to other programs and partnerships that have the potential of benefiting company employees (such as eldercare, volunteer, Meals-on-Wheels, or transportation programs.) These programs may be offered by the partner organization or other community agencies.

"The Pima Council on Aging and the University of Arizona added credence to our efforts to open a claims office staffed by older people in Tucson."

— Chuck Ackland
Northwestern National Life Insurance Company

The Aging Network Benefits, Too

When you create a partnership, your organization "wins," too. Some of your possible benefits are:

1. Funding to implement new programs and fulfill your mission in additional ways.
2. Job opportunities for older workers.
3. Training opportunities for older workers.
4. Education about the private sector's point of view.
5. Technical assistance and management expertise.
6. Advocacy and marketing of your organization in the community, especially the business community, by business partners who can make statements that are viewed as credible and unbiased. When your partner introduces your organization to a peer, you begin with a positive image.
7. Stronger links to the private sector, which may lead to future in-kind donations, letters of support for grant requests, and business representatives who will review grant requests.
8. Visibility in the aging network and the general public. Some organizations have gained nationwide publicity about their partnerships.
9. Increased staff motivation due to private sector interest in your program and older workers.

This is the age of the global economy, in which worldwide partnerships among corporations are commonplace. Whether partnerships span continents or merely link two organizations across town, they are created because they provide mutual benefits to partners with parallel interests. The aging network and the business community have much to share with each other, to the benefit of both.

Chapter 2

The Range of Partnership Possibilities

Not all older worker partnerships are created equal. Different partnership formats meet different company needs and, therefore, attract different partners. For example, a company primarily wanting publicity will be interested in a different partnership than an employer needing recruitment assistance.

Seven categories of partnerships are described below, and examples are included within each category. These examples and others are described more fully in Chapter 4.

New partnership formats are emerging all the time. They can be as varied as our organizations and our visions. Rather than limiting you, we intend the categories listed below to spur your imagination and help you generate ideas about a format that will meet the needs of your organization and those of your partners.

Job Fairs

Job fairs are special, one-day events in which businesses and other organizations staff booths and display information about their job openings for older people. This is a way for organizations to recruit new employees. Sometimes these fairs are held during Older Americans Month (May) or National Employ the Older Worker Week (the second full week in March).

Typically, the aging network coordinates the fair by contracting a site and arranging for booths and tables, recruiting businesses to participate, and publicizing the fair to older people through press releases, public service announcements, billboards, posters, and the like. Businesses pay for the opportunity to staff a booth and provide in-kind donations, such as refreshments, printing, postage, publicity assistance, and transportation to the fair for older job-seekers.

Tips on Job Fairs

1. Recruit all types of employers, especially those with positions above entry-level.
2. Allow at least 6 months, and preferably a year, to plan your first job fair.
3. Allow only companies that have current job openings to attend if you can recruit enough such companies.
4. Keep in contact with employers who attended to determine how many people were hired as a result of the fair. While these statistics are difficult to collect, they are useful for employer recruitment and publicity the following year.
5. Consider creating a Job Fair Task Force comprising other older worker service organizations in your area. Representatives can share the work and the benefits.
6. Contemplate having one prime sponsor, a corporation that will provide significant support and reap enhanced publicity benefits.
7. Mention all sponsors (businesses that contribute more than booth fees) and companies with booths in publicity and printed materials.
8. Decide up front whether your fair will be limited to job opportunities or will include education and volunteer opportunities. Job fair organizers across the country disagree on this issue, but all have made a decision about their focus.

Tips

on Advisory Committees

1. When approaching a potential business representative, be specific about the amount of time you are expecting from her/him and what else you expect or might request from the representative. Be clear that this is an advisory committee, not a board of directors with fiduciary responsibilities.
2. Highlight the benefits of participating and mention to potential representatives the names of other prominent businesses represented on the committee.
3. Starting small is OK. Some successful committees began with four or five businesses.
4. Invite members that reflect the diversity of your local economy.
5. Although contacting businesses with which you already have relationships may bring you strong representatives, also use invitations to participate as a "foot-in-the-door" technique with major companies with which you want to develop new relationships.
6. Use members' time wisely. If you have little of importance to discuss, postpone a meeting.

One of the most successful job fairs in the country is coordinated by the New York City Department for the Aging. Co-sponsored by the New York Chamber of Commerce and Industry and in existence for 10 years, the annual job fair draws approximately 3,500 older people and more than 100 businesses, including NBC and Chase Manhattan Bank. The Department works hard to promote the fair and it pays off: WNBC-TV covers the fair on the evening news; other TV stations cover the event; newspapers publicize the event; attractive fair booklets list attending companies; and Department representatives appear on radio and TV talk shows before the fair.

Job fairs offer many benefits to employers. First, jobs fairs offer a company significant opportunity for publicity and exposure because they are tangible events. They provide a way for a company to show community interest, and they are an opportunity to promote a company (and, indirectly, its products) to the older population.

Second, job fairs provide direct access to older job-seekers, a segment which employers often consider an untapped labor pool. If the aging network partner provides a profile of the applicants that have attended previous fairs, the company can evaluate whether or not the job fair attendees will meet its recruiting needs.

Third, employers in areas that do not have frequent job fairs for other types of job-seekers may be attracted simply because this type of recruiting is a novelty.

Finally, older worker job fairs offer companies a positive way to address equal employment opportunity goals.

Older Worker Advisory Committees

Older Worker Advisory Committees are groups of employers called together to provide guidance to aging network organizations. Committees may focus on specific topics or projects, such as program marketing or a job fair. More often, committees are ongoing and more general, with topics changing according to the needs of the network agency.

Advisory committees are often the first type of partnership a network agency creates. The agency invites business representatives, usually people with human resources or marketing expertise, to be members. The agency coordinates meetings on a monthly, quarterly, or as-needed basis and also may contact committee members for advice between meetings.

These are usually limited partnerships at the outset, with the business leaders providing only their time and advice. However, these committees provide a network agency valuable program suggestions, and are often stepping stones to larger partnerships, both with businesses represented on the committee and others.

One example is the New Jersey Division on Aging's Task Force on the Older Worker, which was begun in 1982 and has grown dramatically. With more than 20 business members, including Crum and Forster Corporation, the Task Force has: coordinated business conferences on older worker issues, created a publication about managing an aging workforce, provided technical assistance to a large business interested in recruiting 1,000 older workers, conducted older worker focus groups, and made presentations to Chambers of Commerce.

Business representatives reap many benefits from participating on advisory committees. They gain pertinent information about older worker issues, such as recruitment of older workers, training strategies, managing an older workforce, and demographic trends. This information is gained from network agency staff, peers, and through self-education projects. Occasionally, these committees will spend time addressing a specific older worker concern of one member company. Advisory committee representatives also learn about community organizations that assist companies in older worker recruitment. Finally, some members also value the networking with peers that occurs in the committees.

Older Worker Joblines

An older worker jobline is a centralized number that can link older job-seekers and employers to each other and to other employment/recruitment services. When older job-seekers call, they are referred to one or more older-worker employment-service organizations, or directly to a job opening called in by an employer. When an employer calls in a job opening, that information is transmitted (via phone, modem, or mail) to appropriate older worker employment service organizations.

The aging network organization first gathers information about local or regional older worker employment services. The aging network organization also staffs the jobline phone, publicizes the jobline, and transmits job information to older worker employment service organizations. Business partners may provide funding, publicity assistance, and job openings.

"We acknowledge our business partners on all conference brochures and everything that is written about this project. We also mention our partners in any telephone call about the project to another business."

— **Bob McDonald**
Seniors' Resource Center

Assistance

with Creating Older Worker Joblines

Two forms of assistance are available from Career Encores, an older worker coordinating agency in Los Angeles. First, a detailed how-to manual about creating an older worker jobline, *HOTLINES That Work: Linking Jobs with People*, is available for $4 (plus $1 shipping and handling). Second, Career Encores can provide jobline consultation. To order the manual or for more information, contact:

Career Encores
5225 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 204
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(213) 933-9537

Jobline information is also available from 7 other older worker coordinating organizations nationwide:

Arkansas ABLE (Little Rock)
(501) 374-1318
Operation ABLE, Inc. (Chicago)
(312) 782-3335
Operation ABLE of Greater Boston
(617) 439-5580
Operation ABLE of Michigan (Southfield)
(313) 443-0370
Operation ABLE of Southeast Nebraska (Lincoln)
(402) 471-7064
New York City Department for the Aging
Senior Employment Services
(212) 577-7595
Vermont Associates for Training and Development
(St. Albans)
(802) 524-3200

Tips on Older Worker Promotional Events and Campaigns

1. Depending on the format of your first celebration, allow six to nine months for planning.
2. Be sure that you have the staff capacity to respond to calls from the public, which may increase dramatically.
3. Have facts about older workers at your fingertips so you can respond easily to calls from the media.
4. Prepare several articulate older workers (preferably people who have gained employment through the help of your organization) for media interviews.
5. Consider calling together a business advisory committee or task force to help with an older worker special event.

In Atlanta, the Atlanta Regional Commission (the AAA) began a jobline in 1991. The implementation of the jobline was funded by the Sears-Roebuck Foundation and The Travelers Companies. In nine months, it received 324 job orders for more than 2,700 positions.

Sponsorship of a jobline offers a company publicity opportunities and the chance to use the recruitment service itself.

Older Worker Promotional Events and Campaigns

National Employ the Older Worker Week is the second full week in March. Many aging network organizations capitalize on this week through special promotions, which can be partnerships. Others create promotions during Older Americans Month (May) or at other times of the year. Some promotional examples include:

- Posters highlighting Older Worker Week and emphasizing the value of hiring older workers and using older worker employment services
- Tabletop signs for restaurants with the same messages
- Special events honoring older workers and employers who hire them
- Contests for "Older Worker of the Year"
- Certificates for employers to use in honoring their own older employees
- Special ads and articles in newspapers
- TV public service announcements

Some organizations create an entire range of materials and events and recruit businesses to be sponsors of all the activities.

Each of the options listed above can generate media coverage and an increase in the number of older workers and employers calling the aging network organization for assistance. The aging network organization typically coordinates the publicity and special event, and oversees production of printed materials. Partners may contribute graphic design services, printing, display space for posters or tabletop signs, use of a facility for an event, food, favors or other promotional items given away at an event, advertising space or time, postage, or other items or services.

Businesses are interested in these projects for several reasons. One prime reason is positive publicity. For example, the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan produces 2,000 Older Worker Week posters which are displayed by more than 1,000 employers. One Michigan restaurant that displayed the poster has had an older customer declare that she returned just because of the display!

Older worker promotional partnerships also may help a company identify itself as a recruiter of older workers. Finally, a promotion gives a company an opportunity to show commitment to its own older employees.

Speakers Bureaus, Employer Forums, and Older Worker or Employer Conferences

A speakers bureau is a group of employers who make presentations about the value of hiring older workers, the availability of recruitment assistance from older worker employment services, and their own companies' experiences in employing older workers. Generally, speeches are made at business and professional gatherings.

The aging network organization calls together the potential speakers, provides training about older worker issues, and often assists with speechwriting. The business partner contributes by agreeing to make a specified number of speeches per year and helping to locate speaking opportuni-

ties. For example, the AAA in Western Michigan has created a speakers bureau and had two training sessions. AAA staff will write individualized speeches for each speaker, and business representatives from such companies as D & W Food Centers, Inc. and Home Health Services will make at least two speeches per year.

Sometimes an activity connected with an advisory committee, speakers bureaus offer the additional benefits to employers of gaining:

1. company and personal exposure, publicity and acknowledgment of commitment to an important community issue;
2. respect from peers;
3. additional networking opportunities; and
4. the chance to identify one's company as a source of employment for older workers.

Employer forums have various formats. They may be simply panels of employers who discuss the profitability of hiring older workers (for employer audiences) or give tips on being hired (to older job-seeker audiences). The forums may be individual events or part of larger conferences. In Olympia, Washington, the Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging coordinates job-seeker/employer breakfasts, in which three employers discuss their hiring practices, describe open positions, and answer questions from older job-seekers. Partner companies include *The Olympian/USA Today* and St. Peter Hospital.

Generally, network agency organizations coordinate the events, and employers contribute their time and expertise. Being a part of a employer forum offers the same benefits as being part of a speakers bureau.

Older worker or employer conferences are more elaborate events, lasting one or more days. A business partner's involvement can range from being on an advisory committee to underwriting the entire conference.

The Oregon Senior and Disabled Services Division (State Unit on Aging) coordinated six conferences in the state for employers and older workers. Employers were members of conference panels and served as members of advisory committees. The Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging involved employers more thoroughly in their one-day, intensive job search seminar for 400 older people. Employers spoke, but they also provided funds for lunch and advertising. The Chamber of Commerce distributed flyers.

The Seniors' Resource Center Mountain Services Program in Evergreen, Colorado, arranged for an even higher level of business involvement. Lutheran Medical Center underwrote the entire Summit '88 employer conference on recruitment, management and training of older workers. Now with a new name of Advantage '91, SRC has enticed Adolph Coors Company, Denver Marriott West, Martin Marietta, and U.S. West to assist with the conference.

Business sponsors of an older worker conference may receive a great deal of publicity from the project.

"The Advisory Council seemed like a good opportunity to learn about a new area. We had employed several retirees and it had been very rewarding. I thought I could assist the Advisory Council in seeing the needs of small business, but I also wanted to gain ideas from other businesses about how to adapt our workplace to things like job-sharing and part-time work."

— Lynn Gregory
J. Pat Gregory and Associates, Inc.

Tips

on Speakers Bureaus, Employer Forums, and Conferences

1. When asking employers to be speakers, be able to state clearly the goals of the conference or event, and the objectives you want the speaker to meet.
2. Consider older worker job search conferences when the local economy is not strong enough to support an older worker job fair.
3. Use low- or no-cost sources of advertising, such as Chamber of Commerce newsletters for employers and religious newsletters for older workers.
4. Give participating employers follow-up information, such as attendance levels and evaluation results.

Tips on Training Programs

1. Look for business partners who are frustrated in their attempts to hire employees with positive attitudes and good skills.
2. Invest a lot of "up-front" time developing your relationship with your business partner, especially if your program will train older people for a single organization. Learn about the operations of the partner's company.
3. Be aware that training programs are long-term projects. Be persistent!
4. If one of your partners is conducting the training, encourage that organization to keep good training records to help you evaluate the program.

Training and Mentoring Programs

Training programs are highly variable. Two prime areas in which programs differ are:

- The type of organization which provides the training
- The strength of the link between the training program and job placement

Training may be provided by the company which will hire the older workers, a for-profit temporary agency, a vocational-technical school, or an aging network organization. The link to jobs may be limited, as when business partners merely serve as mock interviewers for trainees.

On the other hand, partners may promise to interview those who have completed training for true job openings or even agree to hire all those who complete training. Some examples of these variations are:

- In San Diego, the Area Agency on Aging works with the McDonald's McMasters Program. McDonald's provides the training and hires all those who successfully complete it.
- In eastern Florida, the Area Agency on Aging coordinated a program in which a vocational-technical school provided computer training, older volunteers provided employability skills training, and business leaders served as mock interviewers. The businesses subsequently have hired several trainees.
- In New York City, IBM provided all of the computer hardware and software for the AGEWORKS Technology Center. The Area Agency on Aging provides the training.

Training programs are sometimes coordinated with federally funded Job Training Partnership Act or Older Americans Act Title V programs. Both AAAs and State Units on Aging operate Title V programs.

Benefits to business partners are as varied as the programs themselves. By sponsoring or helping to develop a training program for older people, a company often has the first chance to recruit trained workers. These workers are trained in a fashion that the company values, as well, because it has influenced the curriculum. Businesses also often reap publicity benefits.

In contrast, mentor programs may be designed to help workers of all ages obtain employment. For example, in Sonoma County, California, business leaders from organizations such as Optical Coating Laboratory, Inc. give program advice as members of a task force. These partners also train older volunteers to act as mentors or "big brothers and sisters" to old and young job-seekers facing employment barriers.

Membership Programs: The Combination Approach

A membership program will probably include one or several of the partnership formats mentioned above. These programs usually focus on heightened recruitment assistance, such as quicker response time to and priority treatment of job openings listed with the employment program. However, they might also include out-placement assistance for down-sizing companies. A newsletter might provide educational benefits.

Membership programs most often are offered by organizations that operate full older worker employment programs. Generally, these are not Area Agencies on Aging, but organizations specializing only in older worker programs. However, an exception is the New York City Department for the Aging, which offers three levels of membership to Fortune 500 companies. The Dime Savings Bank of New York, a top-level member, receives priority status on its job orders, a free booth at the annual "Ability is Ageless" job fair, a quarterly newsletter, a recruitment event for one type of job, and either out-placement services for 10 managers or an additional recruitment fair for all types of open positions.

"Selling" the Partnership

Clearly, each type of partnership has unique reasons for employers to be interested. When you create a partnership, you will analyze the benefits to the employer from the private sector point of view. Those are the benefits you will "sell" when approaching companies.

"[In Tucson,] we've nearly eliminated our turnover issue [through our partnership] because the people we have attracted between the ages of 50 and 72 have made a commitment to stay with us. We have a solid foundation of trained people, and they are very customer-oriented."

— Chuck Ackland
Northwestern National Life Insurance Company

"When business people commit, they really commit. They want to make things happen. They get back more than just feeling good. They feel the project goes forward and achieves goals in the community."

— Robin Schaef
Sonoma County AAA

Chapter 3

Steps in Creating an Older Worker Partnership Strategy

"The intent of these forums is to bring together the public and private sectors to increase understanding of the impact of the aging workforce and enhance both sectors' ability to address aging issues and corporate concerns."

— Bob McDonald
Seniors' Resource Center

The road to creating a partnership is often highly individualistic. The steps below are not a "how-to" guide for any specific type of partnership. The steps are designed to help you create a partnership strategy.

Different agencies are at different starting points, and you may want to adapt these steps to meet the needs of your agency. If you have already created one or more partnerships, using these steps to stand back, look at the broad picture, and create an overall partnership strategy may be helpful. However, the steps below will be most helpful if you and your organization have not yet initiated a partnership.

Finally, while these steps are guideposts for the partnership road, many partnerships seem to occur almost spontaneously. Businesses sometimes approach network agency organizations with requests for recruitment assistance or other joint projects. Often partnerships occur because of chance connections with people in the business community. Such fortuitous connections can be the beginnings of creative partnerships. With a watchful eye and by still paying careful attention to planning, you can skip some of the steps below.

Step 1: Identify Needs and Problems

Partnerships are created to address a variety of different needs or problems, and the form of partnership will vary accordingly. A partnership is not an end in itself; it must exist for a purpose. Some useful methods you might try in identifying needs and problems include: reviewing data, interviewing experts, and brainstorming.

Reviewing Data and Publications and Attending Conferences

One way to identify problems and needs, especially if older worker employment is a new topic for you, is to review data from a variety of sources. You might consider the following sources:

Local information sources
- Service or needs assessment data
- Public hearings
- Chamber of Commerce reports
- Local university publications or sources, such as those related to industrial relations or labor market planning projects
- Other local labor forecasting experts

State information sources
- State job service reports about unemployment, older workers, and employers' workforce needs

National information sources
- Publications on older workers and employers from organizations such as the Washington Business Group on Health and the American Association of Retired Persons

- Conferences with older worker information, such as annual conferences conducted by the National Association of State Units on Aging, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the American Society on Aging, and the National Council on the Aging

Interviewing Local Experts

Another way to identify problems and needs is to gather information from others involved in older worker employment locally. You might speak to:

- Staff of local older worker employment services
- Staff of your local job service
- Local university faculty specializing in gerontology
- Human resource representatives from local businesses known for recruiting older workers

Brainstorming

The goal in brainstorming is to identify as many needs and problems as possible. It is effective in a group setting, given that you begin with appropriate guidelines. Most importantly, no idea should be evaluated during brainstorming, because evaluation hinders others from suggesting possibilities. This step should have no predetermined outcome. At this point, brainstorming should not focus on partnership projects, but all needs and problems related to older workers.

You might convene a special brainstorming meeting of one or several of the following groups:

- Your staff
- Members of your established advisory committee of business representatives
- Staff from other older worker employment programs

Step 2: Develop Goals

Armed with data about needs and problems, you must select the primary problem(s) you will address and develop goals to meet those problems. Some goals that other aging network organizations have selected are in the box below.

When reviewing and clarifying your goals, you might consider which group's needs you are primarily trying to address. All partnership projects are designed to provide benefits to three groups: the aging network organization, the business partner(s), and older workers. However, your goal will determine your primary beneficiary. Is it the older worker, by increasing training opportunities? Is it your organization, by gaining publicity for your program? Is it a business, by assisting it with a specific recruitment need?

Goals

Aging Network Organizations Have in Creating Older Worker Partnerships

Some of the reasons Area Agencies on Aging have created older worker partnerships include:

- To gain business input or policy advice to improve an employment program
- To improve marketing materials and strategies
- To gain additional publicity for an older worker program
- To increase training (and, therefore, employment) options for older people
- To assist a specific business in training or recruiting older workers
- To improve the employability of "non-competitive" jobseekers
- To create a modest, perhaps one-time, employment service because an organization does not have such services for older workers
- To expand the number of older people an employment program can serve without increasing staff
- To educate the private sector about older worker issues
- To increase coordination between older worker programs
- To expand employment options for older people by bringing older workers and employers together in new ways

Step 3: Assess the Environment

Internal Environment

Now is the time to assess what internal resources you have available to devote to the development and implementation of the partnership. Resources you might assess include:

- Staff time
- Staff expertise
- Supplies
- Printing capabilities or budget
- Communications capabilities (i.e., hardware capacity and staff ability to handle calls professionally)
- Office space

External Environment

You will also benefit by assessing the external environment. Consider the following questions:

- Is the issue you have identified being addressed by other organizations, either locally or regionally?
- Do you have competition in meeting this need?
- What competition do you have for the resources you will need to successfully launch your partnership, such as:
  - Business partners
  - Media attention
  - Those to whom you will provide services, such as older workers or older jobseekers, or employers

Finally, consider what additional information you need at this point. Depending upon your assessment, you might go on to Step 4, or you might stop the planning process and put your partnership on hold until your internal or external analysis becomes more favorable.

"You have to act like business to have business listen to you. We had to point out to [potential Business Advisory Committee Members] why they would want to participate in this."

— Timothy Cook
AAA of Western Michigan

Step 4: Select Program Options

If your assessment (Step 3) has given you a green light, you will be ready to identify and select program options. You might brainstorm again to identify program options that would address the goals you identified in Step 2.

In evaluating your options, consider these questions:

- How well does this option address my goal(s)?
- How does this option fit within my organization and its mission?
- What are the resources required, and what benefits do I expect for my organization and the community? (Cost/benefit analysis)
- What problems, if any, will this cause for my organization?
- How feasible is the proposed option?

Step 5: Plan Your Approach

Analyze the Partnership from a Business Perspective

Thoroughly analyze your program option from the private-sector partner's point of view. Identify the benefits that you will be offering to business, which might include:

- Access to older job-seekers, perhaps newly trained to meet the organization's needs
- Publicity and visibility
- Credibility in the community
- Education about older workers
- Links to other community recruitment sources
- Opportunities to honor its own older employees

As specifically as you can, identify the results that the company can expect from your partnership. You will use this information in your written materials.

Create Your Plan

Your plan will specify the operational and funding details of your program. This planning will prepare you for presenting your partnership to businesses (Step 6). With limited partnerships, such as advisory committees designed to provide program policy advice, your plan might be quite short. For extensive partnerships, such as creating a new computer training program for older workers, your plan will be extensive.

See the suggested elements of your plan in the box.

Identify Potential Business Partners

The first five "types" of companies you might consider are:

1. Companies with which you have developed a relationship through your current older worker program, advisory committee, or other projects with your organization
2. Companies which have a local reputation for their interest in older workers
3. Companies which have become known nationally for their interest in older workers and have a local office
4. Companies which face the issues described in Chapter 1, such as slow workforce growth and difficulty in recruiting, concern about the skills and attitudes of the younger workforce, aging workforces of their own, or aging customer populations
5. Companies with a reputation for support of community organizations

Next, consider the types of companies for whom your specific project has relevance. Examples include:

- Job Fair Sponsorship:
  - Companies with high turnover
  - Companies with at least 50 employees

Elements of a Partnership Plan

1. Organizational resources: Financial and in-kind resources from your organization and staff to be deployed on the project.
2. Outside support and resources: Contributions (cash and in-kind) to be made by business partners, grants for which you will apply, and elements of your project that are already available in the community and will be used for this project. (For example, you might use a community meeting room for an advisory committee or tap into existing training opportunities at community colleges when designing new training options for older people.)
3. Operations and timeline: How the project will be accomplished and the time frame, including tasks to be performed by each staff person.
4. Long-term plan: If your partnership requires significant initial financial resources provided by grants or business contributions, determine the method of continuing the project beyond the first funding cycle. If the project will not be continued, determine what long-term benefits it will provide, if any.
5. Evaluation: Determine how you will know if your partnership is a success and meets its goals. Include your business partners, and perhaps older workers, in your evaluation plan.
6. Termination plan, if appropriate: Some projects, such as an older worker week celebration, have a natural ending, and the termination plan might be as simple as holding an evaluation meeting with an advisory group and sending thank-you letters to businesses. Other partnerships, such as advisory committees, are of a continuing nature. The termination plan simply may be requesting businesses to commit for a one-year term and asking for renewed commitment at the end of the year. Still other partnerships, such as an older worker jobline, are of a more complicated nature, and may leave a significant void in services if created and then removed. By creating a termination plan, you will acknowledge your expectations for the length (and possible growth) of the partnership, and be prepared for its possible ending.

"The [New Jersey] Task Force [on the Older Worker] has opened up a whole world of contacts in the private sector, not just within the Task Force, but beyond."

— Norm Mattson
New Jersey Division
on Aging

- Displaying Older Worker Week Materials:
  - Companies with high in-store customer traffic
- Advisory Committees:
  - Both small and large companies to gather different points of view
- Business Memberships:
  - Only medium to large organizations will have the necessary resources

What persons or references can help you further identify companies that might be interested in your partnership? Consider:

- Chamber of Commerce representatives
- Chamber of Commerce list of major employers in your area
- Staff from older worker employment programs and senior centers
- Local business publications
- Business section of your local newspaper

You will want to evaluate the business before inviting it to join your partnership. Consider the business's reputation in the community and its reputation related to older workers. You might investigate, for example, whether or not it has any pending age discrimination suits.

Prepare Written Materials for Business

In designing your materials, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Be succinct!
- Avoid jargon.
- Highlight the benefits to and results for business. (Remember, you are selling!)
- Promise only what you can deliver.
- Clearly describe the partnership.
- Clearly describe your expectations of the partner.

For a limited partnership, such as an advisory committee, your written materials might be a one-page summary of the time commitment and types of advice that will be requested. For an extensive partnership in which the company invests funds, such as a membership plan, you might prepare more detailed marketing materials listing the partnership benefits and how they will be provided.

Step 6: Approach Partners

The goal of your first call will generally be to get a short appointment to meet your potential partner in person.

Hot Calls

Your easiest approach will be a "hot" call, that is, a call to a company with which you already have a relationship, either through a previous partnership or because your employment program has placed an older worker with the firm. You will know the appropriate contact and can probably easily make a short appointment (10-20 minutes) to present your partnership opportunity.

Warm Calls

"Warm" calls are those made to select companies with which you have no previous relationship. Your call is "warm" because it is made after a business person who is aware of your organization's success and knows someone in the potential partnership company makes the first contact. This peer-to-peer contact gives your organization outside credibility and increases the chance that you will be able to get through by telephone to your potential partner and set an appointment to discuss your partnership.

Members of a business advisory committee or advisory council, business representatives who have hired through your employment program, or a representative from the Chamber of Commerce may be willing to make the first contact. They must understand the details of your program. However, their goal is not to sell your partnership, but to open the door for you to sell it.

Cold Calls

"Cold" calls, while a more difficult approach, have also worked for aging network organizations initiating partnerships. Some organizations that have sought partnerships with companies in which they have no contact have begun with a letter followed up with a phone call. Very few partnerships are created by letter alone, however. Some companies may respond to job fair invitations with only letter contact, but most partnerships require personal contact.

Types of Contacts

Most often, your contacts will be in the human resources, public relations, or community affairs departments of large firms. For smaller firms, your contact may be the director of personnel, president, or owner.

Presentation Guidelines

Some limited partnerships, such as advisory committees, conference planning and presentations, and one-time job fairs, may not require an in-person appointment, but merely a phone call. Long-term partnerships most often require in-person contact.

In making your request, whether by phone or in-person, consider these guidelines:

- Highlight the benefits to the company.
- Secondarily, highlight the benefits to your organization, older workers, and the community.
- Be direct and specific about what you are requesting from the company.
- List the other businesses that have already joined your current partnership or other partnerships with your organization.
- Express confidence and discuss your past success.
- Listen to the employer's views of older workers and the needs of the company; even if the company does not join in this partnership, the information might be useful when you design your next partnership.
- Provide enough time for the company to consider your request and make a decision prior to your event, meeting, or deadline. The first person you contact may need to get approval from upper management levels or may suggest that you contact another company representative.
- Present options for several levels of involvement or different events. (For example, the New York City Department for the Aging membership program has three membership levels. As part of the Coalition for Older Worker Employment, the Seattle-King County Division on Aging invites employers to chose from two job fairs, a conference on older worker issues, and an older worker awards luncheon.)
- Take a short partnership commitment form that the business representative can sign that day or return via mail or fax.
- Name a specific date that you will contact the potential partner again, to provide further information or obtain an answer about the partnership.
- Follow up, follow up, follow up.

Even if your potential partner decides not to participate, send a thank-you letter for the opportunity to discuss your project. This may keep the door open for future partnerships with the company.

"Because it is a nationally celebrated week that is time-specific, Older Worker Week is our best window of opportunity for exposure and advocating for older worker employment."

— Timothy Cook
AAA of Western Michigan

"I can't say enough about how easy the breakfasts are for the value of what we get out of them. One of the nice things the coalition has discovered is how much you can do with so little. We use lots of other resources and little money."

— Linda Shoemaker
Lewis Mason
Thurston AAA

Step 7: Implement the Partnership

Implementation time is as varied as partnerships themselves. The Louis Mason Thurston AAA breakfast meetings for job seekers and employers take only 4 hours to implement. A first job fair may take 9 months to plan; a training program might require one year of planning. At this point, however, you have already created your plan (in Step 5) and you are ready to go!

Include publicity as part of your implementation. Some partnerships, such as events, include promotional activities as a natural component. Other partnerships, such as advisory committees, require more creative promotional methods, such as mentioning the committee and participating employers when discussing older worker issues in radio or television interviews and including the committee's role in press releases about AAA programs.

Step 8: Nurture, Evaluate, Adjust, and, Possibly, Terminate

Nurture Your Partnership Relationship

Selling employers on your partnership doesn't end when you have obtained their first agreements to participate. Maintain contact and keep employers informed of progress on your project. Ask if the partnership is meeting their needs and goals, and refine your project accordingly.

Evaluate and Adjust

If your partnership is an ongoing program, you may conduct evaluation informally as part of maintaining contact with employers. It also will be effective to schedule evaluation as a annual process. This will provide you information with which to make adjustments to your program.

One-time or time-specific programs have a natural ending time at which to evaluate.

Termination and Expressing Appreciation

Regardless of the format of your termination and whether or not you follow the termination plan you designed in Step 5, you will want to maintain a positive relationship with your business partners. Expressing appreciation in the form of a thank-you letter is an appropriate method of doing so. Sending a copy to the president, chief executive officer, or the level of management above your partnership contact might be appreciated as well. If you have any question about the appropriateness of a letter to upper management, ask your partnership contact if he or she would appreciate it.

Final Considerations

These steps are a model for you to adapt for your organization, depending upon your experience with partnerships and your organization's needs.

Even with all of your planning, potential business partners may not be interested in the partnership options you bring to them. Potential partners may suggest alternatives that more closely meet their needs. Listening to business at this point is critical.

Can you be flexible? Sometimes it will be to your advantage, because your partner's new ideas will meet your needs and goals. At other times, new options presented by your potential partner will take you too far off your mark. Indeed, sometimes a suggested partnership will not be your best option. Having completed the steps above, you will have a strong framework to use in deciding upon new possibilities presented by potential partners.

Chapter 4

Partnerships in Action: Case Studies

Descriptions of 20 partnerships follow. These descriptions include an explanation of why the organizations began the partnerships, when and how they were implemented, their growth, the resources these organizations used to begin such partnerships, the impact on the network agencies, and the partnership challenges the organizations faced. The company names of the business partners are in bold print.

Most of the partnerships described have been created by Area Agencies on Aging. A few are exceptions. A small number of partnerships included have been created by State Units on Aging or a non-profit organization receiving Older Americans Act funds. Several partnerships involved a coalition of organizations, although the AAA was typically the lead organization.

Many of these partnerships have had dramatic, positive results. Others have been disappointing to the aging network organizations involved. Both types are included as examples to give a complete picture of partnerships.

Organizations that create older worker partnerships do not necessarily operate older worker employment programs themselves. If you are not operating an employment program, you can still design an older worker partnership.

Job Fairs

Erie County Department of Senior Services/AAA

"Ability is Ageless" 55+ Job Fair

What?

This job fair provides an opportunity for 40 businesses and numerous community organizations to inform older job-seekers of their job openings and services. The AAA coordinates the fair and contacts businesses. There are two levels of business partnership. On a limited level, 40 businesses pay $125 for a booth at the fair. On a more significant level, businesses such as **Norstar Bank, New York Telephone, SPS Health Care, Penn Advertising,** and **Wegmans Food Markets** sponsor the fair by providing cash or in-kind support such as printing of flyers and programs, graphic design, postage, fair refreshments and hospitality room, transportation for older job-seekers, and billboard space. A breakfast for exhibitors and sponsors precedes the fair.

Why?

Each year during Older Americans Month, the AAA conducts a special event. The type of event is influenced by an Administration on Aging theme or local needs. This event was selected because staff had heard of several other AAAs producing job fairs with success, and staff had seen numerous articles about the needs of older workers and recognized those needs in their own area.

"A member of our Board of Directors from the business community said, 'You are meeting your employment program goals, but I don't think you can ever have too much information. You should put more emphasis on the private sector now.'"

— Timothy Cook
AAA of Western Michigan

"Keep your focus. If it is a job fair, make it a job fair. If you include other topics like volunteerism and education, it gives credence to public misperceptions that older people only need or want part-time, low-wage jobs."

— Scott Brown
Erie County Department of Senior Services

When and how?

Planning for the first fair began in summer, 1989, and the fair was held in May, 1990. Planning time is spent recruiting businesses and informing them of fair logistics, recruiting job-seekers, conducting a media campaign of public service announcements, press releases, and presentations, and making site arrangements.

Has it grown?

Forty businesses have attended each year. More than 1,200 older people attended the first year.

The focus has shifted slightly. The first year, the fair was billed as an opportunity fair, and included emphasis on volunteer and educational options as well as employment. The second year the focus was on employment alone.

In the second year, companies were not allowed to attend unless they had positions available. Staff have made efforts to attract employers with higher level positions.

What resources were needed?

For the first job fair, staff estimate that one year of planning is required. Thereafter, four months planning time should be sufficient. One full-time staff person and a part-time clerical worker are needed. Necessary staff skills include organization and publicity skills and sensitivity to the needs of older workers. This AAA estimates a project budget of $16,000 from Job Training Partnership Act funds. This will cover professional staff salary, but not clerical salary. Publicity is provided by sponsors; convention center costs are offset by fees. Eight sponsors provided in-kind services worth approximately $700 each.

What has it done for the agency?

At least twenty older job-seekers were employed as a result of the first fair. The fair provides the AAA positive contact with the community and good publicity.

Challenges?

The second fair was challenged by the downturn in the local economy, but the number of attending employers equaled that of the first year. Staff also believe that the public's perception that older workers need only low-paid, part-time work hampers their efforts. In addition, getting media to attend the kick-off press conference is a challenge.

Contact:

Scott Brown
Job Fair Coordinator
Erie County Department of Senior Services
95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 858-8423

New York City Department for the Aging/AAA

"Ability is Ageless" Job Fair

What?

This job fair is a collaborative effort. The AAA recruits exhibitors and people to present workshops on job-finding techniques. The AAA also coordinates outreach, printing, volunteers, and the entire event. The fair has been co-sponsored for 10 years by **WNBC-TV**. The Chamber of Commerce sends a mailing to its members. Approximately 7 other companies, such as **Chase Manhattan Bank**, provide printing, posters, giveaways for attendees, balloons, and boutonnieres for staff. Other businesses rent booths for $500. State Department of Labor staff assist in directing attendees to appropriate booths.

Why?

The AAA wanted to promote older workers as a viable option to business.

When and how?

In 1981, the AAA patterned its first job fair after the Operation ABLE job fair in Chicago. The 1981 fair took one year of planning time to gain partners, co-sponsors, and community involvement.

Has it grown?

Yes. In 1981, 56 companies were represented, many of which were temporary employment firms. In 1991, more than 100 companies attended, and fewer were temporary firms. In excess of 3,500 older people attended.

What resources were needed?

For the first fair, 50% of one staff person's time was needed for one year. An advisory council also assisted. AAA staff report that if an agency has done a job fair before, five months of planning time is adequate, although nine months is preferable. Currently, on the day of the fair, 40 AAA staff and 80 RSVP and advisory council volunteers are needed. Staff salaries are provided in-kind.

Two grants pay for the site rental. Profit is approximately $10,000, but this does not cover in-kind salaries.

What has it done for the agency?

The fair provides tremendous publicity to the AAA. Placement figures probably are under-reported because collecting data from all attending businesses is difficult. However, in one year, at least 350 older job-seekers were hired as a result of the fair.

Challenges?

The AAA has continued to attract more than 100 businesses in years of economic downturns by hiring telemarketers to call a list of businesses provided by the Chamber of Commerce.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
Director
Bureau of Program and Resource Development
New York City Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10007
(212) 577-7349

Seattle-King County Division on Aging/AAA and Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens

Older Worker Employment Resource Fair

What?

This day-long resource fair features businesses, training facilities, and community service providers offering opportunities for mature job-seekers in the greater Seattle area. The AAA coordinates and produces the fair. In the last two years, the AAA has done so in conjunction with the Coalition for Older Worker Employment, a partnership of non-profit and government agencies that have banded together to produce this and other events. (The Coalition was created in response to funding from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation, which the Washington State Employment Security Department received to coordinate the job fair, a business forum, a banquet honoring older workers, and a older worker publicity campaign.) In 1991, businesses such as **Washington Mutual Savings Bank** and **Larry's Markets** paid $100 per booth and staffed the booths with recruiters.

Why?

The first fair was the result of a local research project on older worker employment. At that time, the AAA was a member of the project advisory council. The AAA has continued the fairs each year, sometimes in conjunction with other organizations, because staff recognizes the unmet need for job opportunities and older worker employment services. The AAA has not had enough staff to serve all the older people requesting employment assistance; the fair is one way to expand their services. Staff also sees the fair as a forum to bring employers and older workers together.

"The challenge is always to get more businesses involved, to contact new businesses, and to avoid contacting the same businesses all the time. This is where the Coalition helps."

— John Peterson
formerly with the Seattle Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens

"As an employment program, we are a teenager now. In our first year, we couldn't make teenager decisions. Now we can. We have come up with the Coalition for Older Worker Employment, and perhaps we can now solicit donations and sponsorships—both in-kind and cash—for events."

— John Peterson
formerly with the
Seattle Mayor's Office for
Senior Citizens

When and how?

The first fair was held in 1983. In 1991, two fairs were held. Staff suggest that at least 3 months of planning time is required. Activities are essentially the same as those described in the job fairs above, except this AAA does not distribute a letter requesting sponsorships.

Has it grown?

Yes. Statistics are not available for 1983, but significant growth occurred between 1990 and 1991. In 1990, 25 businesses and 270 older job-seekers participated. As many as 50 people were hired as a result of the fair. In the first 1991 fair, 35 employers and 350 older job-seekers participated.

What resources are needed?

At least 15 hours of staff time per week for 3 months is required if the fair is produced in coordination with other agencies. If conducted by the AAA alone, perhaps staff time of 1-1/2 people is required for 3 months. Staff skills needed include organization, written communication, and public relations abilities, and the capability of communicating well with business representatives. A printing and postage budget of $1,000 to $3,000 is needed, most of which is provided by the Coalition partners.

What has it done for the agency?

The partnership has allowed the AAA to reach and serve a greater number of older job-seekers. It provides an opportunity for the AAA to promote its services. The Sears-Roebuck sponsorship has given the fair, the Coalition for Older Worker Employment, and the AAA credibility in the business community and paved the way for future business involvement in the Coalition. Plans are in the works to gain business members in the Coalition and for the Coalition itself to become a partnership.

Challenges?

The first time a fair is launched, enticing business is difficult because there is no track record of success. Additional staff time could be used to make more business contacts and increase the number of businesses attending.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Employment Program Coordinator
Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens
618 Second Street, Suite 250
Seattle, WA 98104- 2217
(206) 684-0500

Other Job Fairs

Job fairs are being developed around the country, in both urban and rural areas. The AAA may not be the lead organization, for job fairs often are coordinated by a consortium. One example of the consortium model is in rural Arkansas. According to Richard Negri, Ph.D., Employment Specialist for the White River Area Agency on Aging, the Batesville, Arkansas Chamber of Commerce created an older worker job fair committee to hold its first job fair in 1991. This committee comprises 4 business representatives, AAA staff, and Chamber staff. Although the AAA is not the lead organization, it gains valuable partnership benefits such as visibility with businesses and increased access to business.

Similarly, the Senior Alliance / Area Agency on Aging that serves western Wayne County in Michigan collaborates on a job fair coordinated by Operation ABLE (Ability Based on Long Experience) of Michigan. The partnerships in this job fair are created by ABLE, but the AAA gains benefits of access and visibility through its role and through its follow-up efforts. The AAA may develop its own partnerships in the future.

Finally, Days Inns of America, Inc., the nationwide hotel chain, sponsors Senior Power, a national older worker job fair held each May. Local Days Inn hotels invite community employers to join in interviewing older workers. To support the job fairs, Days Inns has established strong information-sharing partnerships with various AAAs.

Older Worker Advisory Committees

Colorado Aging and Adult Services/State Unit on Aging

Governor's Older Worker Task Force: Private Sector Advisory Council

What?

This council of employers provides Colorado Aging and Adult Services with knowledge of private sector viewpoints, expertise, and information about older worker issues. Members have spoken to Chambers of Commerce to advocate for older workers and spoken on behalf of older worker employment in videotape training materials for the staff of older worker programs. They also have developed a resource book for program staff and reviewed curriculum designed to train job developers about working with the private sector. Business members have included **J. Pat Gregory and Associates** and **Colorado National Bank**.

Why?

Staff of the SUA believed that if they were concerned about older workers and their employment in the private sector, they needed private sector input. The Committee was designed to strengthen ties with the private sector.

When and how?

Approximately 6 years ago, the Governor's Older Worker Task Force was created as an interagency group of state-level government organizations providing employment services or funding to adults. Approximately two years later, the Governor's Older Worker Task Force identified the need for a Private Sector Advisory Council. PSAC was created almost immediately because Task Force members were already aware of 4 business representatives interested in older worker issues.

The first meetings were devoted to educating PSAC representatives about the Job Training Partnership Act 3% Set-Aside for older workers, the Older Americans Act Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program, the state's job service, and older worker issues. In following meetings, PSAC members began planning activities in which they wished to be involved.

Has it grown?

The Task Force now has 9 members. Of these, 5 are working in the private sector, and two have maintained their PSAC membership after retiring from the private sector. PSAC has also changed focus. The Governor's Older Worker Task Force originally believed PSAC would provide employment program policy advice. PSAC members are interested in broader older worker issues, and have been more involved in advocacy, marketing, and educating employment program staff than policy issues.

With the help of PSAC, the Governor's Task Force is developing a public education project, including a brochure about the impact of Colorado's aging workforce, conferences for employers, and award activities to honor employers who do an exemplary job of hiring and retaining mature employees.

"I always come away from the group all pumped up. It motivates me and other state agencies. You get the sense that your work is meaningful and that someone appreciates it."

— Lu Horner
Colorado Aging and Adult Services

What resources were needed?

Approximately 5% of one staff person's time has been required to arrange and conduct meetings. Staff skills required include knowledge of group process and older worker employment issues, and organization skills. The Governor's Job Training Office provided JTPA 3% funds for the Governor's Task Force and PSAC (as well as a Senior Employment Network of service providers.) The SUA provides in-kind support.

What has it done for the agency?

The three groups—the Task Force, PSAC, and the Senior Employment Network—have had a tremendously positive impact on the SUA, which has received significant national visibility and recognition. There has been great success in linking various senior employment services. State Unit staff and employment service providers have expanded their knowledge of aging and older worker issues beyond the programs that they operate and have gained understanding of the private sector viewpoint.

Challenges?

The most significant challenge has been continuing this and all other State Unit programs with reduced funding and fewer staff.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

No, members of their Senior Employment Network provide direct service.

Contact:

Lu Horner
Program Administrator
Colorado Aging and Adult Services
Department of Social Services
1575 Sherman Street, 10th Floor,
Denver, CO 80203-1714
(303) 866-5911

"I can't say enough about the Private Sector Advisory Committee. It is a great benefit and resource. I am always amazed at the amount of work the members are willing to do, and at their enthusiasm."

— Lu Horner
Colorado Aging and Adult Services

New Jersey Division on Aging/ State Unit on Aging

Task Force on the Older Worker

What?

The goal of this partnership between the New Jersey Division on Aging and representatives of leading corporations is to advocate for the rights and opportunities of older workers, reduce ageist attitudes in business, and encourage the hiring and retention of older workers. Division staff coordinate and chair the Task Force. Business members provide technical assistance, are speakers and leaders in conferences and older worker focus groups, print materials about older worker issues, and coordinate projects related to older workers. Business partners include **Crum and Forster Corporation** and **Brian Forrest Associates.**

Why?

In the early 1980s, the New Jersey Division on Aging foresaw that funding for aging programs would receive few increases and, perhaps, substantial cuts in the future. The Division viewed the private sector as one source of additional funds, but had had little contact with the private sector. An initial meeting of community affairs representatives from major corporations was held to begin developing relationships with the private sector.

When and how?

The initial meeting was held in 1982 after one staff person made cold calls to invite the group together. Older worker issues were raised at that meeting, and the group decided the issues were important enough to continue meeting. Twelve businesses were involved originally. Recruitment and initial meetings that focused on the Task Force's role required about two months.

Has it grown?

Dramatically. Membership has increased from 12 to more than 20 business representatives. The Task Force has organized projects that Division staff never anticipated. Among these projects are:

- Educational and advocacy conferences for businesses on older worker issues.
- Support in the development and presentation of training materials for business on understanding and managing an aging workforce. (This project was grant-supported.)
- Creation of a publication for small businesses about managing an aging workforce.
- Individualized technical assistance to one large business interested in recruiting 1,000 older workers.
- Older worker focus groups to gather more information about older worker attitudes for use in advocacy.
- Presentations to Chambers of Commerce and other business groups about older workers.

What resources were needed?

Creation of the committee required about 25 percent of one staff person's time for two months. Staff skills needed include knowledge of older worker issues and ability to make cold calls to businesses.

Agency funds are required to cover staff salary, clerical support, mailing and phone costs. The Task Force businesses have provided for all other costs associated with conferences, a publication, and projects (with the exception of the grant-supported development of training materials). Conferences are also supported by fees.

What has it done for the agency?

The impact on the Division has been very positive.

In addition to the programs that the Task Force has implemented, member businesses have provided:

1. Facilities and low-cost meals for network/agency, staff-training programs
2. Information on issues related to older workers, such as pensions, that has been requested from the Division by older worker callers
3. Letters of support for grants
4. Peer-to-peer business contacts to encourage hiring older workers.

Challenges?

No significant challenges have been faced in creating or maintaining the Task Force. The Task Force itself has felt challenged reaching small businesses to advocate about hiring older workers.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

No.

Contact:

Norman O. Mattson
Liaison to Business and Industry
New Jersey Division on Aging
363 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
(609) 292- 4833.

"You must have good facts about older workers to pass on to the Task Force. I stay current by reading newspapers and financial and personnel journals."

— Norm Mattson
New Jersey Division
on Aging

Older Worker Joblines

Atlanta Regional Commission/ AAA

Older Worker Jobline

What?

The jobline is a regional clearinghouse for employers seeking to hire older workers and for older workers seeking employment. The AAA operates the jobline as a free service to businesses and older workers. Sears is the primary business partner. In its "National Awareness Program to Promote Employment Opportunities for Older Adults" which is administered by Operation ABLE of Chicago, the **Sears-Roebuck Foundation** provided a grant to this AAA to create the jobline, hold an older worker awards event, and undertake a media campaign. (The event and campaign are described in a later section.) **The Travelers Companies** also provided support.

Why?

Operation ABLE of Chicago received a grant from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation to implement the National Awareness Program in five cities. This AAA had developed a telephone relationship with Operation ABLE staff and was selected to implement the program in Atlanta after a site visit by ABLE staff.

When and how?

Funding was received in April, 1990, and the jobline began in July, 1990. The AAA already provided information and referral services, so implementation was an extension of current services. Employers who call are given an immediate match of an older jobseeker who has called, or are referred to other employment services in the area, such as JTPA and Title V programs.

Has it grown?

The jobline received 324 job orders for 2,705 positions from July, 1990, through March, 1991. More than 550 older job-seekers called the jobline. Recent jobline activity has diminished because the Sears funding has ended, and the program is in transition until additional funding can be obtained.

What resources were needed?

One jobline counselor spent 85% time on this project, and a senior aging services specialist spent 5% time in oversight duties. The entire National Awareness Project was supported by $27,500 from the Sears-Roebuck Foundation. The Travelers Companies provided an additional $1,000 for the jobline. These funds covered all jobline costs.

What has it done for the agency?

The success of the entire awareness project has convinced project staff and staff throughout the AAA of the potential that partnerships have in a time of diminishing federal funds. It has encouraged others in the AAA to begin to test partnership relationships.

The project enhanced the public image of the AAA and the reputation of the Atlanta Older Worker Project. The Atlanta Older Worker Project was stimulated, focused, and gained new members, both representatives of business and service organizations.

"There are obviously mutual benefits. We don't have to feel guilty about approaching business."

— Paul Campbell
Atlanta Regional Commission

Challenges?

Maintaining the jobline after the termination of Sears funding is a challenge. The jobline will be supported with JTPA funds, which will require meeting specific contract goals that are different than those in the original project. Jobs listed by employers were not well-matched to the needs of the job-seekers who called the jobline. Employers list low-skilled jobs; job-seekers are often more highly skilled. The AAA will address this mismatch by making presentations to businesses and running ads in a business publication. Developing the trust of the other organizations to whom employers are referred takes significant time.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

No, the only employment program is the jobline.

Contact:

Paul Campbell
Senior Aging Services Specialist
Atlanta Regional Commission/AAA
3715 Northside Parkway
200 Northcreek, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30327
(404) 364-2556

Other Joblines

Older Worker Joblines are coordinated by a number of non-profit organizations that are not AAAs. Most of them were patterned after the model begun by Operation ABLE of Chicago. Each has evolved to meet the needs of its region. All joblines are at least limited partnerships, in that employers call in job orders that aging network organizations attempt to fill. Some are more extensive partnerships, with business partners providing financial or other support. A list of older worker coordinating agencies that have joblines is included in Chapter Two.

Older Worker Promotional Events and Campaigns

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan

Older Worker Week Promotion

What?

Each year the AAA designs, produces, and distributes marketing materials that promote older worker employment. Typical materials are posters or table top signs for restaurants. Businesses such as **D & W Food Centers, Inc.** display the promotional materials in public view.

Why?

The partnership was designed to promote older worker employment during Older Worker Week.

When and how?

The first materials were created in 1981. Some years, the materials are created in conjunction with the State Unit on Aging and distributed to all AAAs in Michigan. Materials are promoted through press releases and businesses are invited to call if they wish to be involved in the older worker celebration by displaying posters or other materials. Businesses are also contacted by letter and phone calls from AAA staff.

Has it grown?

Yes. In the first several years, 25 businesses participated. Now approximately 2,000 posters or table tops are distributed to more than 1,000 employers.

What resources were needed?

In the first year, a staff person needs to begin planning three to six months ahead. Staff needs to have marketing knowledge, organizational skills, and knowledge of local businesses. A budget of $500 to $1,000 is needed for design and production. This does not include staff salary.

"Businesses didn't expect it, but they found the posters benefited them. Customers have come up and complimented the businesses because of the posters."

— Timothy Cook
AAA of Western Michigan

What has it done for the agency?

The partnership generates media coverage from the press release and increases the number of job orders called in by employers and the number of older worker applicant calls.

Challenges?

Distribution to employers is time consuming. It can be a challenge to allow enough lead time for planning and to have enough telephone and staff response capability when press releases and marketing materials are delivered.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Timothy Cook
Employment Programs Coordinator
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
1550 Lake Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616) 456-5917

"Be ready to respond when your product goes up and your press release goes out. Staff had better be there to answer calls. It is not unusual for 10 to 15 radio stations to request interviews and 2 television camera crews to show up that day."

— Timothy Cook
AAA of Western Michigan

Atlanta Regional Commission/ AAA

Older Worker Awards Event and Media Campaign

What?

The purpose of the first November event was to honor older workers, not employers. (The AAA already has an event in May to honor employers.) Employers are invited to nominate their outstanding older worker. All 33 older workers nominated in 1990 were honored at a luncheon; five were given distinguished service awards. The AAA coordinated the event through a subcontractor. The media campaign included press releases and television public service announcements.

The primary partner is the Sears-Roebuck Foundation, which funded this as a component of the National Awareness Project described in the jobline section above. **WSB Television** co-sponsored the event, videotaped the event, and interviewed the five honorees on its "Family to Family" show.

Why?

The event and campaign were created in response to a grant opportunity as in the jobline section above.

When and how?

The AAA was selected in April, 1990, as a program site. Operation ABLE provided press releases and a public service announcement for television, which the AAA distributed. Two independent television stations played the PSA regularly. One senior magazine provided especially good coverage of the award event.

Although a local older worker employment program was subcontracted to coordinate the event, AAA staff maintained contact with local Sears management. AAA staff and staff from the subcontracted organization received training about the entire project from Operation ABLE.

Though no advisory committee was established specifically for this project, the AAA is a member of the Metro Atlanta Older Worker Project, a group of service providers and employers that are concerned about older worker issues. This group provided advice and support throughout the project.

Has it grown?

Sears also provided $5,000 for the 1991 event.

What resources were needed?

The publicity campaign required 10% time of a senior aging services specialist and 5% time of the AAA communication officer for three months. The subcontracted event required 15% time of the aging specialist for 2 months. Sears provided $27,500 for the entire project, including the jobline described above. This covered all program costs, including salaries. There was a $15-per-person fee for the event.

What has it done for the agency?

The impact is the same as for the other portions of the project described above.

Challenges?

Encouraging major television stations to run the public service announcement was a challenge because the stations receive so many requests. If the standardized PSA could have been altered to include a trailer about the local station's support of the project, it may have received more air time. Being ready for the media calls that result from the campaign is also a challenge. Staff must be prepared with older worker facts and older workers who are willing to be interviewed. Local Sears stores wished for more time to nominate older workers for the award event.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Primarily as a coordinating organization with the jobline described above.

Contact:
Paul Campbell
Senior Aging Services Specialist
Atlanta Regional Commission/AAA
3715 Northside Parkway
200 Northcreek, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30327
(404) 364-2556

Speakers Bureaus, Employer Forums, and Older Worker and Employer Conferences

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan

Speakers Bureau, Marketing Plan and Business Advisory Committee

What?

This partnership of the AAA and local businesses was designed to create marketing materials to promote hiring of older workers. Committee members from businesses such as **D & W Food Centers** and **Home Health Services** will critique current marketing materials and advise the AAA during the creation of new written materials and speeches. Each member has agreed to deliver at least two speeches to business groups, and to continue serving on the committee after the initial grant period of one year and two speeches are completed. The AAA also plans to gain technical assistance about fundraising issues, such as the development of fee-for-service programs.

Why?

The AAA sought a way to seek the input of business. Agency staff believed they were addressing the needs of business, but also believed that additional information about business needs would best come from business itself.

A second impetus for implementing the program in 1990-91 was an opportunity to apply for a grant that would support advisory committee development.

"A key to our success was having the Metro Atlanta Older Worker Project already in place. These people knew each other and knew they wanted to do something to stimulate older worker activity. We didn't need to beat the drum to get support. Some employers were already on the Project."

— Paul Campbell
Atlanta Regional Commission

"From day one, we have seen no reluctance on the part of business. We were a bit surprised by that. Rather, I should say, it confirmed what we hoped was there in the business community. It confirmed that we know the businesses with which we work."

— Timothy Cook
AAA of Western Michigan

When and how?

The program began in December, 1990. Staff identified businesses that had listed jobs with the AAA employment program and other large businesses in the community. Potential members were called and invited to participate. All agreed, and they were sent a follow-up letter. In the first meeting of approximately 12 business representatives, the program was outlined. There will be two training sessions: one on demographic trends and their impact on business, and one about the development of individual speeches. Committee members will help AAA staff write speeches tailored for each member. Speech content will focus heavily on the advantages of hiring older workers, with a business-to-business perspective. AAA staff will locate opportunities for the members to give the speeches.

AAA staff estimate that a total of three months of committee development and planning time are required before speakers can be ready to present their materials.

Has it grown?

The program is still in its infancy.

What resources were needed?

For this program, the AAA uses a small amount of staff time from each of three people: a job developer contacts businesses, a legislative staff person develops information for speeches, and the employment program coordinator handles correspondence with business and coordinates the committee meetings.

Skills required include speech-writing ability, knowledge of local businesses, organizational skills, and ability to deal with the private sector in a business-like manner.

A grant for $3,000 was received to create marketing materials. The agency will match those funds with $3,000 in marketing funds. Staff time was not covered by these funds.

What has it done for the agency?

The impact has been entirely positive, though the program is still in the developmental stage. It has been helpful to staff to meet with business, and to have business members meet one another, because members now realize that a network of businesses uses the AAA employment service. This has strengthened support for the AAA employment program. Morale of the program staff has been raised, and committee members have listed more jobs with the employment program.

Program staff also anticipate that the speakers bureau and new marketing materials will increase the number and improve the quality of job orders they receive for older workers.

Challenges?

The only challenge has been the transition from working with another agency that originally was a joint project sponsor to fulfilling grant obligations as a single agency.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Timothy S. Cook
Employment Programs Coordinator
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan, Inc.
2 Fountain Place, Suite 540
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 456-5664

Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging

Older Worker Job Search Seminar and Job-seeker/ Employer Breakfasts

What?

The AAA (as a part of a coalition of older worker employment service providers called *Join the Mainstream: Jobs After 50*) coordinated a one-day, intensive job search seminar for more than 400 older people. The AAA and the coalition coordinated the event. The AAA itself took all reservations and handled all correspondence with employers. Businesses provided speakers and funds for lunches and advertising. Businesses also advised the coalition on program content. The Chamber of Commerce distributed flyers.

The AAA and the coalition have continued their efforts to assist older job seekers through no-host breakfasts in which 3 employers make presentations about their hiring practices and recruitment needs and answer questions from older job-seekers. For these mini-partnerships, the AAA handles reservations, advertising, and correspondence. Business partners from companies such as ***The Olympian/ USA Today*** and **St. Peter Hospital** contribute their time and expertise.

Why?

The Older Worker Community Event was the first project of *Join the Mainstream: Jobs After 50*. This group was created by the Secretary of the Washington State Employment Security Department. A group of older professionals who had volunteered for the legislature and were subsequently unable to obtain employment, approached the Secretary about the lack of assistance available to older workers. The coalition considered a job fair, but the economy was not strong enough to support such an event, so the job search seminar was chosen as an alternative. The coalition believed that older worker needs were ongoing and chose breakfasts as a way to continue the seminar with little staff time.

How and when?

The coalition first met in October, 1988, and the day-long seminar was held in March, 1989. Planning involved arranging for speakers, the site, and an extensive advertising campaign including flyers distributed through three Chambers of Commerce and through a religious newsletter with a circulation of 10,000.

The first breakfast was held in May, 1990, after two coalition meetings to determine the format and after coalition members contacted the employers.

Has it grown?

The job search seminar was a one-time project involving 12 businesses. Each of the five breakfasts have involved three businesses and drawn nearly 50 older job-seekers. The breakfasts will continue.

What resources were needed?

For the AAA portion of the event, one staff person contributed 15 hours per week for approximately two months. Two staff people took reservations full-time for two weeks. Several other committee members contributed approximately 10 hours per week for one month prior to the event. Volunteers helped in distributing flyers. Businesses provided approximately $900 towards the event and the Employment Security Department and Private Industry Council provided approximately $400 for publicity. Lunch fees were $1. The breakfasts require only one month of lead time, four hours of staff time, and a small budget for newspaper ads. Staff salaries are not included in these fund estimates.

"One of the most important aspects of this project was the creation of the coalition. These community groups had not been working together and sharing information about clients or referring clients. We all became very familiar with each other's services. Now we work together on an ongoing basis for individuals and the community."

— **Linda Shoemaker**
Lewis Mason Thurston AAA

"Each business becomes educated about the availability of older workers. Involvement with us breaks down pre-conceived notions about older workers. A lot of the outcome is employer education, even if it is through the back door. They provide information to job-seekers, but they are also learning."

— Linda Shoemaker
Lewis Mason
Thurston AAA

What has it done for the agency?

The projects have developed much greater community awareness for the AAA Title V employment program (and awareness of other older worker employment programs). The programs have reduced employer stereotypes, and employers are now contacting the AAA when they have job openings. Through this new awareness, the AAA has expanded its employment role and does more employment information and referral (both to other services and to jobs) for older workers who do not meet Title V criteria.

Challenges?

Encouraging businesses to speak at the original event was difficult because the event was held during a poor economic period when employers were already inundated with job applicants. For the breakfasts, the coalition has had difficulty involving businesses with jobs in the trades, such as welding and contracting.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Linda Shoemaker
Title V Coordinator
Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging
503 W. 4th Avenue
Olympia, WA 98501
(206) 786-5579.

Oregon Senior and Disabled Services Division/State Unit on Aging

Older Worker Conferences

What?

The Oregon Senior and Disabled Services Division, which is a State Unit on Aging, and the Oregon State Job Training Partnership Office coordinated 6 conferences throughout the state for employers and older worker service providers. Employers provided their time and expertise by serving on panels at the conference and by serving on the Advisory Committee.

Why?

SUA staff approached the State JTPA Office because that office had technical assistance funds available for training older worker program staff. The workshop goals were to increase awareness of older worker issues and the value of older workers, and to increase coordination among local service providers. Employers were involved in planning, but there were no employer panels in the first conferences in 1988. Service providers who attended in 1988 recommended that, in future years, employers present information about how the service providers could best assist them, so panels were added.

How and when?

The conferences were held in 1988 and 1989. The planning committee included a bank representative, a private consultant, and staff from the SUA, the JTPA Office, older worker service providers, and a community college. The SUA and JTPA staff coordinated the conference logistics and speakers. SUA staff facilitated the workshops and promoted the conference through Area Agencies on Aging and older worker service providers.

Has it grown?

The total number of employers involved in planning the conference, serving on a panel, and/or attending the conference has grown from 15 in the first year to 36 in the second.

What resources were needed?

SUA staff time amounted to approximately 35% of one person's time for nine months. Staff skills required include a commitment to coordination, ability to work with community and state agencies, and knowledge of employers who are interested in older workers. Technical assistance funds were provided by the State JTPA Office. The SUA contributed Title V funds, and staff time was provided in-kind. There was no fee for attendance.

What has it done for the agency?

The SUA and the service providers gained information about how better to serve employers (and, thereby, increased their effectiveness in placing older workers). SUA staff also learned about how to approach business and has had greater success in garnering in-kind support for Older Worker Week celebrations. Contact with employers who are interested in hiring older workers has been encouraging to SUA staff.

Challenges:

The SUA originally had difficulty explaining their conference goals and how business could assist in reaching those goals. SUA staff also found it difficult to identify local businesses that would serve on the panels.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

No.

Contact:

Pat List
Program Coordinator
Oregon Senior and Disabled Services Division
Human Resources Department
Room 313, Public Services Division
Salem, OR 97301.

Seniors' Resource Center
Mountain Services Program/
Non-profit Organization

Managing an Aging Workforce Conference

What?

The Seniors' Resource Center produces a one-day conference for business leaders that addresses recruitment, management and training of older workers and legislative issues. In 1991, it was entitled *Advantage '91: Managing an Aging Workforce.* **Lutheran Medical Center** underwrote the entire conference in 1988 and was heavily involved in conference planning. Planning is now conducted by a committee of public agencies and employers. Businesses provide seed money for printing and mailing, in-kind meeting rooms for the conference, speakers, and advice about program content. Businesses currently involved include **Adolph Coors Company, Denver Marriott West, Martin Marietta,** and **U.S. West.**

Why?

SRC employment program staff recognized that the workforce was aging and growing slowly, and yet still saw older people facing age discrimination. This project was designed to educate the private sector, the general public, and aging service providers about employment trends and the importance of planning ahead for an aging workforce.

How and when?

The first program was conducted in the fall of 1988. SRC approached the Lutheran Medical Center because the two organizations already had a relationship. SRC was providing transportation for older people to the Center for medical services. The planning committee now meets once per month for a year before the conference.

"In the first year, our thrust was to get the [older worker] issue out on the table and increase awareness."

— **Bob McDonald**
Seniors' Resource Center

"The impact has been almost overwhelmingly positive. The staff and board feel good about the strokes that come from this project."

— Bob McDonald
Seniors' Resource Center

Has it grown?

Yes. In the first year, the program had one business sponsor and one private sector speaker. Approximately 20 attendees were from the private sector. In 1991, two sponsors provided funds, two additional private sector speakers participated, and approximately 40 attendees were from the private sector. The focus has changed from developing awareness to management of the aging workforce.

What resources were needed?

Professional staff contributes approximately 100 hours to the conference, and six other committee members contribute approximately 15 hours each. Staff skills required include planning, logistic, and marketing skills. Staff also must be able to work with and motivate people from different segments of the economy and effectively approach business for seed funds.

The private sector covers out-of-pocket costs with seed money of approximately $3,000. SRC provides staff time in-kind through Jefferson County funds. Volunteers assist with mailing and registration. Conference fees are $45 per person. (The first year the budget was much higher, approximately $15,000, primarily due to speaker fees.)

What has it done for the agency?

The conference has provided excellent visibility for SRC as a leader in the area of older workers. The staff and board of directors are very encouraged by the positive attention the agency has received.

Challenges?

The SRC board was initially resistant to using staff time and resources for something other than direct service, but staff convinced the board that the conference would have a long-term impact and increase employment opportunities for older people.

SRC had to change its partnership after the first conference because Lutheran Medical Center wanted to continue yearly conferences about all types of employment, not only older worker employment. The ending of that partnership required SRC to forfeit the conference name, Summit '88. The first year, 75% of attendees were service providers, so SRC altered its mailing list to target businesses.

Great persistence has been needed in approaching business and gaining their commitment. Intensive staff effort is required to coordinate this program on top of the normal employment program, but staff is also motivated by the event.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:
Bob McDonald
Director
Mountain Services Program
Seniors' Resource Center
5120 Highway 73
Evergreen, CO 80439
(303) 674-2843.

Training and Mentoring Partnerships

Anne Arundel County Department of Aging/AAA

Senior Employment Referral Service Clerical Training

What?

Through the cooperative efforts of the AAA, **Manpower, Inc.** (a for-profit, temporary placement service), and the Maryland General Assembly Office of the Speaker of the House, 15 older workers were recruited, trained, and tested for temporary clerical positions with the General Assembly. The AAA coordinated the project, recruited older job-seekers with clerical background, and provided training on job-seeking. Manpower provided "brush-up" typing training and computer training. General Assembly staff provided an orientation to the Assembly and the opportunity to apply and test for clerical positions.

Why?

General Assembly staff approached the AAA because the applicant pool for temporary clerical positions has decreased recently. These positions last only for the convening period of the Assembly, January to April each year. AAA staff knew of the Manpower training program and of a partnership grant opportunity, which encouraged them to create the partnership.

When and how?

Training occurred in October and November, 1990. Testing was in November. The AAA recruited applicants with newspaper ads, screened applicants, and coordinated the Assembly orientation and job-seeking training. Screened applicants were referred to Manpower to join their open-enrollment training program. AAA staff suggest that two months of concentrated recruitment and three months to conduct training would be ideal.

Has it grown?

The program has just completed its first cycle. Fifteen older job-seekers expressed interest in training, 9 completed training, and 2 were hired by the General Assembly. Applicants are still informally referred to Manpower for training and placement in other types of positions. AAA staff began recruiting for 1991/2 trainees in July, 1991.

What resources were needed?

This project required approximately 50% of the employment service director's time for a month and a half. Public relations and recruitment skills are needed. The project budget of $3,000 was used to assist in paying for Manpower training costs and AAA postage and publicity costs. The employment service director's time (which is county-funded) was provided in-kind.

What has it done for the agency?

AAA staff view this project as being in the developmental stage, with limited success at this time because only 2 older workers were hired. However, applicants who were not hired by the General Assembly still received new skills and may use their new skills in positions with other employers. In addition, the project has provided positive publicity.

Challenges?

Staff found that a longer recruitment period was needed than they had available in the first year. (Applicants must be recruited before tests are held for the Assembly positions; these are on a fixed schedule.) Staff were frustrated that trainees were not guaranteed jobs, only the opportunity to compete for positions. Competition is difficult because many hiring decisions are influenced by personal connections in addition to the normal testing and interviewing process.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

"There were benefits beyond the actual project. Older job-seekers were trained well and can use the skills they developed with organizations other than the General Assembly."

— **Dianne Turpin**
Anne Arundel County Department of Aging

Contact:

Dianne Turpin
Director of Senior Employment Referral Service
Anne Arundel County Department of Aging
101 Old Solomons Island Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
(301) 222-7011.

Council on Aging of Santa Clara County, Inc./AAA

McMasters Partnership

What?

The goal of this program was to train older people for mid-level management positions within **McDonald's** restaurants. The AAA provided recruitment and screening and older workers' wages during training. All participants were eligible for the Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program. McDonald's conducted interviews of AAA-screened candidates at the AAA, selected participants, and provided training and job opportunities.

Why?

McDonald's made an overture to the National Council on the Aging about training partnerships. The National Council on the Aging Title V program offered the AAA the opportunity to apply for 501(e) funds for this project. McDonald's was intrigued with the concept of hiring and training older people for mid-level management positions and was impressed with this AAA's success in running job fairs and placing older people in high-tech positions, so the company encouraged the partnership.

When and how?

The program began in late 1988. Planning and initial meetings with local and national McDonald's representatives required approximately three months. More than 120 people, including the AAA's current Title V enrollees, were screened using McDonald's criteria. Over a one-year period, 20 people were interviewed by McDonald's,10 were selected for training, and two completed training and became employed by the firm.

Has it grown?

No. The AAA was disappointed with the number of people selected for training and has, with McDonald's concurrence, terminated the program.

What resources were needed?

Fifteen hours per week of job developer time were needed for the first five months when interest in the program was high. When the program did not meet the expectations of the AAA or McDonald's, staff time was gradually reduced to five hours per week, and eventually the program was ended. NCoA provided $9,000 in Title V funds, which paid for trainees' wages. AAA staff time was contributed in-kind.

What has it done for the agency?

The agency is pleased that two people obtained mid-level management positions, but the overall impact on the agency was negligible. Though the partnership was terminated cordially, the relationship with McDonald's has not continued.

"A trusting relationship over time is what makes a partnership a success. There needs to be a trusting relationship up front."

— Stephen Schmoll
Council on Aging of Santa Clara County, Inc.

Challenges?

The AAA staff feels that both the AAA and McDonald's conducted insufficient planning. Local McDonald's staff would have benefited from preparatory sensitivity training and information about managing older workers. AAA staff would have benefited by more detailed screening criteria and more thorough job and training descriptions. Additional meetings for sharing this information would have developed a stronger partnership relationship and more realistic expectations on both sides.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Stephen Schmoll
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Council on Aging of Santa Clara County, Inc.
2115 The Alameda
San Jose, CA 95126
(408) 296-8290

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council/AAA

Senior Employment Program

What?

The Senior Employment Program is a pilot project coordinated by the AAA. The AAA recruited older jobseekers and coordinated employability training for older adults, though the actual training was provided by American Association of Retired Persons volunteers. The Orange County Public School Outreach Project and a vocational-technical school provided computer skills training.

Business members of a previously established Older Americans Month Committee provided job interview practice. (The AAA is a member of this Committee; it is not an Advisory Committee for the AAA.) These employers made no commitment to hire program participants, but several of the 16 participants who completed the first pilot training program were hired by these employers.

Why?

An American Association of Retired Persons representative first approached the AAA to discuss implementation of its AARP Works Employment Program in the area. AAA staff realized that the AARP program provided much needed employability skills training, but that some older people also needed skills training, so staff contacted the vo-tech school for assistance with skills training. The Older Americans Month Committee of employers was involved from the beginning, guiding the decision to provide computer training.

When and how?

Planning began in May, 1989. The first group of older people began training in March, 1990, and completed training in May, 1990. The well-established Older Americans Month Committee had identified older worker employment as a key issue prior to this project.

The Committee was involved in determining the kind of training to be provided and agreed to provide interview training during the planning stages of the project. AARP trained local volunteers to lead eight employability training sessions. The AAA recruited 20 job-seekers through a Title V program and a Meals-on-Wheels job counselor, provided overall project coordination, and arranged two interview sessions at the end of training. The vo-tech program provided 10 weeks of computer training.

"The business partners' commitment was stronger than merely providing interview practice. They were so excited about this partnership, they pledged that they would hire applicants if they met the job qualifications."

— Beverly Wallace
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

AAA staff suggest that approximately one year of planning time is required, but acknowledge that it is a great advantage if an interested group of employers is already organized and committed to older worker employment.

Has it grown?

The number of businesses involved on the Committee has grown from 12 to 18. A second group of 20 job-seekers was enrolled in the training. The training is now focusing on home health care because of the local need for such trained workers. The program has also changed in that the employability skills training was found elsewhere in the community, so the program is no longer using AARP-trained volunteers for that training component.

What resources were needed?

Program development required approximately 25% of one AAA staff person's time during the first year, although very little time is now required of her. Staff skills needed include coordination and planning, public relations, volunteer coordination, and written communication skills, and the ability to encourage businesses and agencies with various goals to work together. Title III-B funds of $1,400 covered training costs. AARP contributed employability training materials and volunteer training. AAA staff salaries were provided in-kind.

What has it done for the agency?

The AAA has received excellent visibility for this project, both locally and nationally. Staff also feels very positive about the outcome for the older workers who were trained and placed. However, staff also notes that this has been a time-intensive project.

"We were already very involved with the employers on the Older Americans Month Committee, but it certainly opened up a lot of dialogue. The group has been very interested in the project, and has provided lots of advice on the next phase, home health training."

— Beverly Wallace
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

Challenges?

Development of this program is staff-intensive.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

No.

Contact:

Beverly Wallace
Planner
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council/AAA
1011 Wymore Road, Suite 105
Winter Park, FL 32789
(407) 623-1075.

Pima Council on Aging/AAA

Northwestern National Life Insurance Company Recruitment

What?

The AAA received funds from the **Northwestern National Life Insurance Company** to recruit 100 older applicants for a new office to be opened in Tucson, AZ. The AAA provided public relations and marketing efforts and screened applicants. The University of Arizona Department of Gerontology provided an instructor to do the training. NWNL provided funding, facilities for training, training materials, and job opportunities.

Why?

NWNL executives contacted AAA staff when they were considering opening an office in Tucson because the executives had seen an article highlighting older worker employment and quoting the AAA's executive director. The AAA became involved because the project would increase job opportunities for older people and because staff was convinced of the company's commitment to the community.

When and how?

A period of five months was required between initial talks to the beginning of the first training class. During that time, NWNL was involved in office and training site selection. The University became familiar with the NWNL training materials, which were created specifically for their company's claims processing systems. The training period was reduced from 10 to 8 weeks in the midst of training because it became evident that trainees would benefit from on-the-job experience as soon as possible. The office started with a small work volume for the first 6 months after it was opened.

Has it grown?

No. When 100 part-time employees are recruited, the project will terminate. The company does not foresee expanding the office.

What resources were needed?

Development of the project required time from a community organizer, the executive director, and financial manager of the AAA. (This time was volunteered by staff because it was in addition to their normal, 40-hour per week activities.) A university-based gerontologist was also consulted. Staff has been hired to conduct recruiting, and will be terminated at the end of the project. All project costs have been covered by NWNL funding.

What has it done for the agency?

The positive outcome is that 100 older people will gain employment. AAA staff see no long-term benefits of the program.

Challenges?

The AAA had hoped to develop a long-term relationship with NWNL, and this has not happened. Termination of the program and staff will be difficult for the AAA. The company has been disappointed that the operational costs have not been lower than their other claims processing centers around the country, but higher. They attribute this to the longer time period it takes for part-time workers to reach fully-trained status.

Few other employment options were open to applicants who were unqualified for NWNL jobs. The AAA created an employer advisory committee to assist with placement of such applicants, but they were not successful.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

No.

Contact:

Chuck Ackland
Northwestern National Life Insurance Company
20 S. Washington Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55440
(612) 372-5432

"We were interested in a partnership because of the changing demographics of the country and because there will be so many more older people in the coming years. We were concerned about serving this group and utilizing them as a part of our workforce."

— Chuck Ackland
Northwestern National Life Insurance Company

New York City Department for the Aging/AAA

AGEWORKS, the IBM Training Center for Older Workers

What?

The IBM Training Center for Older Workers trains mature workers in word processing, spread sheets and data entry, typing, and other office skills. **IBM** is the primary business partner and provides equipment, software, supplies, maintenance, and continued technical assistance. Additional funding was supplied by the **Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York** and the **Florence V. Burden Foundation**. The AAA provides training center space, furnishings, and staffing.

"When you approach a partner, go in with several partnership options. We were flexible with our ideas. When we realized a full training center was possible, we came back with a proposal for a center that would be a national model. It has been a big undertaking, but well worth it."

— Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
New York City Department for the Aging

Why?

The project was initiated by the AAA as a way to make older workers more marketable, to enhance the AAA's other employment services, and to assist in meeting mandated placement levels in its Title V program. Prior to creating the training center, the AAA contracted with traditional training schools to train the agency's older job-seekers. While this arrangement was successful, the training was less than ideal because it was not designed for older workers.

How and when?

The concept was discussed with the AAA's business advisory council in January, 1990. Next, AAA staff approached IBM to discuss IBM's equipment relocation program, hoping to receive equipment that the company was no longer using. While discussing the relocation program, AAA staff became aware that IBM might provide an extensive training center for older workers because this had not been done before. AAA returned with a proposal for the full training center. Simultaneously, the AAA sought a demonstration grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging. Implementation, including preparing the location, developing curriculum, hiring staff, seeking additional sources of funds and supplies, took more than one year.

Has it grown?

Twenty older workers graduated from the first training program in December, 1991. Twelve were employed within three months. A larger group of trainees completed training in March, 1992.

What resources were needed?

Project development required 15% of the bureau director's time and 25% of the Title V director's time. Once the project began, staff included a project director (100% time), two teachers (25% time), and a job developer (25% time). Grant funds (not including the cost of IBM's equipment and support) topped $180,000.

What has it done for the agency?

This project has contributed to the AAA's image as being an innovative creator of public/private partnerships and provided many publicity opportunities. It has improved the AAA's ability to serve older workers who are not eligible for government-funded programs.

Challenges?

It was originally challenging to coordinate different kinds of support from various sources. Expanding the view of the AAA from a provider of recruitment assistance to a provider of recruitment and training assistance is also a challenge. Significant time was needed for the "research and development" phase in which the curriculum was designed.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
Director
Bureau of Program and Resource Development
New York City Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10007
(212) 577-7349

San Diego County Area Agency on Aging

McMasters Partnership

What?

In this employment and training partnership, **McDonald's** hires and trains older employees. A job coach trains new older workers, provides counseling services, and addresses the attitudes towards older workers of other McDonald's employees.

McDonald's also contributes financial resources, training space, and coordination and funding of an annual graduation ceremony during Older Worker Week. The AAA recruits older applicants and pays McDonald's approximately $20,000 per year to underwrite the salary of the program's job coach. This is funded by the California Employment Development Department.

Why?

McDonald's Corporation contacted the California Department of Aging about replicating this program which had been established on the East Coast. The Department, in turn, contacted the AAA. Meetings ensued, and McDonald's expressed interest in creating a partnership with the AAA.

When and how?

The program was implemented approximately two years ago, after nearly eight months of planning. Without the delays in funding experienced by the AAA, four months may be sufficient planning time.

Has it grown?

It is a stable partnership. Now in its second year, it is expected to continue as it currently exists.

What resources are needed?

AAA staff time is used. California Employment Development Department funding of $20,000 is provided to McDonald's through the AAA.

What has it done for agency?

The project has provided additional job opportunities for older workers and has broadened AAA staff's vision of the agency's capabilities and potential role.

Challenges?

Declining business in the McDonald's franchises due to an economic slump and the large number of military personnel that left for the Persian Gulf conflict have been challenges to the hiring of older workers. The positions available through McDonald's offer minimum wage and no benefits, which is a challenge to recruitment. McDonald's role in the partnership is often more highly publicized than the AAA's role. AAA staff believe it is unfortunate that an arrangement was not made for McDonald's to pay the AAA after a specified period of time because the company will be increasingly reliant upon the recruitment of older workers.

Contact:

Dan Laver
Director
San Diego County Area Agency on Aging
4161 Marlborough Avenue
San Diego, CA 92105
(619) 495-5885

"Of the seven public/private partnerships in which the San Diego County Area Agency on Aging is involved, the McMasters program is the best partnership model. Through the development of additional job opportunities for older people, we have been able to reach more seniors."

—Dan Laver
San Diego County Area Agency on Aging

"The task force meets at the AAA offices, and the message gets carried through our organization about the business commitment."

— Robin Schaef
Sonoma County AAA

Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging

Senior Mentor Center

What?

A task force of representatives from the AAA, 4 businesses, and several other public sector agencies developed this program which is designed to address impending labor shortages and to assist job seekers with multiple employment barriers, such as disabilities, low skill levels, language difficulties, and workforce re-entry problems. Job-seekers need not be older workers, but two program participants have been older workers. The AAA coordinates the project and recruits and matches job- seekers and mentors.

The mentors are older volunteers trained by a local community college to assist job-seekers overcome obstacles to employment. Business representatives from such companies as **Optical Coating Laboratory, Inc.** also provide training to mentors and applicants on how to overcome barriers. In addition, business representatives assist the AAA in recruiting their own retirees as mentors. The entire task force advises on policy and outreach methods.

Why?

The AAA received a grant from the Families USA Foundation to conduct a forum for community leaders to discuss involving older people in community problems. This project was selected by the forum attendees as their top priority.

When and how?

The forum was held in November, 1989. The task force was created after this forum; fundraising was its first goal. Funding was received by September, 1990, and the first mentor training was held in February, 1991. Staff spent significant time recruiting mentors and job-seekers, contacting media, making presentations, and coordinating a kick-off reception for business. The AAA estimates that three months of development time is needed after funding is received and staff have been hired.

Has it grown?

The business partnership portion of this project has remained steady with four businesses involved.

What resources are needed?

This project requires at least 80% of one staff person's time. Task force members each contributed between 30 and 45 hours of volunteer time during 3 months of development. Significant clerical support also is needed. Staff needs to have strong connections with the aging network, media contacts, and graphics expertise for effective recruitment.

The project has been funded by $40,000 of Administration on Aging Discretionary Funds and $10,000 from Families USA Foundation.

What has it done for the agency?

The project has provided staff and the AAA Advisory Council with a positive view of business and fostered a feeling of access to business that staff did not have before. It has significantly expanded the organization's contacts with the business community.

Challenges?

Recruitment of senior mentors has been a challenge, partially because the potential volunteers are concerned that they need to be very knowledgeable about business and the workplace. The AAA promotes the role of a volunteer as similar to that of a "big brother" and stresses that training will be provided. Another mentor recruitment challenge may be that the population to be served—"non-competitive" job applicants—is not considered to be deserving or truly needy by potential mentors. Recruitment of appropriate job-seekers has also been more challenging than expected.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Robin Schaef
Director
Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging
940 Hopper Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 524-7250

Membership Programs

New York City Department for the Aging/AAA

Corporate Membership Program

What?

The membership program is the way this AAA provides low-cost recruitment and older worker services to Fortune 500 companies. The AAA has created three levels of membership. At the highest level, member companies receive priority status on filling their open positions, a free booth at the annual job fair for older workers, a quarterly newsletter, an event to recruit employees for one type of job, and either outplacement assistance for up to 10 managers or an additional recruitment fair for all types of open positions. Companies such as **The Dime Savings Bank of New York** pay from $1,000 to $5,000 in membership fees and provide job openings for older workers.

Why?

The AAA decided to create the membership program to increase funding and their ability to serve older job-seekers who did not meet income requirements for government-funded programs. Staff realized that 125 businesses attended their job fair and were seeking recruitment assistance. They decided the membership program would help meet recruitment needs and provide a meaningful way for business to support older workers.

"A by-product of this program is that we have developed a core group of businesses that want to hire older workers. Some company representatives want to interview older workers once per month in our offices."

— Sharon Perkins formerly with the New York City Department for the Aging

How and when?

Planning began in January, 1988, with a kick-off in June of the same year. The AAA held business focus groups to discuss membership and developed "packages" of services to offer as levels of membership. The AAA's business advisory committee was consulted throughout the development process and advised the AAA on membership price. Advisory committee members arranged two meetings with groups of major employers to pitch the membership program.

Has it grown?

Within one year of the kick-off, the AAA had 25 member companies. Twenty continued their membership the next year. Three declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The AAA chose not to renew the membership of one organization. Corporate members themselves are now attempting to recruit additional companies.

What resources were needed?

The AAA devoted 65% of a project manager's time and 15% of the time of the employment program's manager to the membership program. These salaries were covered by grant funds. Four advisory council members provided consistent help in identifying prospect companies. Staff skills needed include marketing and sales expertise, familiarity with the private sector, strong communication skills, belief in the membership concept, and consistency in contacting members. Marketing material design was donated by members. The AAA also had established programs to be used to deliver membership services.

What has it done for the agency?

The AAA sees itself as benefiting from the new and enhanced ties with employers. The increased funding has helped train older job-seekers who do not qualify for government-funded programs.

Challenges?

The AAA set up a separate non-profit organization called "Fund for Aging Services" which allows them to conduct this fee-for-service program. The AAA has recently faced the question, "How big do we want to be and what should we do with the resources we have gathered?" A related challenge is that many member companies have constant needs for additional clerical workers.

Does the network agency also operate an employment program?

Yes.

Contact:

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez
Director
Bureau of Program and Resource Development
New York City Department for the Aging
2 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10007
(212) 577-7349

"Our keys to success are delivering the product—the business members get employees—and keeping members invested, staying close to them."

— Sharon Perkins formerly with the New York City Department for the Aging

End Notes

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Appendix

Greater Seattle Task Force on Older Worker Partnerships

Members of the Task Force provided valuable information about older worker partnerships and reviewed drafts of this guidebook. We are grateful for their assistance.

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